MONGOLIA GENDER ANALYSIS:

Background Paper No. 1 in preparation for USAID/Mongolia's 2004-2008 strategy.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Mongolia's transition has brought both positive and negative impacts to women in terms of their opportunities and choices, and the balance between men's and women's social, political and economic status. In comparison to many countries in the region, Mongolia today is a relatively gender-equal society. Mongolian women participate actively in economic, political, and social life, men and women have similar access to social services, and there is relative gender equity in terms of basic human rights. Compared to Mongolian men, women enjoy similar levels of health (and higher life expectancy), higher levels of education (although enrollment and attainment rates have fallen for both men and women since transition), and lower but relatively high levels of participation in the labor force.

Over Mongolia's 12 years of transition, both men and women have come to enjoy much greater individual freedoms, along with greater personal responsibilities. On the positive side, both men and women have greater choices in terms of education, health care, employment and economic opportunities. Democratic reforms since 1990 have further advanced the favorable legal framework for women's rights that was established in socialist times. On the other hand, many women and men experienced declines in per capita income and increased poverty and vulnerability as Soviet subsidies and trade ended, and many state-provided social and economic services collapsed.

However, despite a favorable legal framework and generally pro-women policies, in practice there are many ways in which women are disadvantaged in terms of their opportunities for participation in economic, social and political life. In short, many of the difficulties of transition have fallen more heavily on women than men, while many of the economic and social opportunities of transition have been harder for women to realize than men. Although Mongolian women do not generally play a subordinate role, cultural, economic and social barriers limit women's opportunities to participate fully in Mongolia's market economy and democracy, and for Mongolia as a country to benefit from women's contributions.

USAID's current programming directly and indirectly addresses many, but not all, of Mongolia's gender issues, mostly in a way that will contribute to furthering Mongolia's already well-developed principle and practice of gender equity. On the other hand, restrictions on women's economic opportunities are a potential constraint to the realization of planned results of USAID programs.

In preparation for the development of a new strategy for USAID's Mongolia program for 2004-2008, this background paper investigates the following issues:

1. Assessment of major gender issues, trends, and concerns as they relate to development opportunities and constraints in Mongolia.

    - The legal and policy environment related to gender equity
    - Demographic and social trends related to gender

- Differences between men and women's participation and opportunities in Mongolia's market economy.
- Differences between men's and women's participation in Mongolia's young democracy and civil society.
- The gender-gap in education
- Domestic violence

2. How will gender relations affect the achievement of sustainable results? How will proposed results affect the relative status of men and women? How do USAID supported programs integrate and attempt to address gender issues? Do proposed and ongoing programs alleviate, exacerbate, or have no impact on the relative status of men and women?

2 ASSESSMENT OF MAJOR GENDER ISSUES, TRENDS, AND CONCERNS

2.1 Historical context

Gender relations in Mongolia today stem both from the country's nomadic roots and its socialist past. Traditionally, Mongolia was a patriarchal society with sharp gender divisions, in which women were mostly excluded from public life and from decision-making roles, but in which women nonetheless played an active role in family economic life and economic decisions. Women were not and are not generally seen as subservient: "From the perspective of Mongolian women today, representations of women in Mongolian history and culture reveal many contrasts, forged by both the nomadic culture and a feudal social organization. In contrast to neighboring cultures, they do not convey a picture of women's subordination but are dominated by the icons of noble women." (UNIFEM*, Women in Mongolia, p. 15*.).

The socialist period in Mongolia brought a principle of gender equality to everyday life, and women's access to education and participation in the labor force increased dramatically. Employment was guaranteed by the state for both men and women. At the same time, the state's active pro-women policy brought child care and other services that encouraged and enabled women's employment, which increased rapidly from the late 1960s through the 1980s (at the same time, under Mongolia's pro-natalist policy, the birth rate also rose rapidly). Wage differentials between and among men and women were small, although significant gender differences existed in the awarding of non-wage benefits and rewards. However, these achievements came at the cost of greatly reduced individual freedoms and choice. They were also based on large, unsustainable subsidies.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and Mongolia's transition to democracy and a market economy brought rapid changes to both men and women. Most of these effects have been documented elsewhere, and this analysis focuses on gender differences during the transition. In particular, economic and political reform brought greatly increased personal freedoms and responsibilities, a dramatic opening of Mongolia to the West and to East Asia, shrinking of the public sector, rapid liberalization of prices, privatization,

development of the private sector, and opening of trade. As noted above, these changes have brought both positive and negative consequences to the balance between men and women's economic, social, and political status.

2.2 The policy and legal environment for gender equity

Mongolia's Constitution, adopted in 1992, guarantees individual rights, including gender equity, freedom of association and political participation, freedom of religion and freedom of movement, and access to medical care. Women's rights are recognized and gender based discrimination prohibited by the Constitution, the civil and criminal codes, and laws on public servants, labor, social insurance, social welfare, health insurance, and the family. In addition, Mongolia is a party to numerous international treaties and conventions related to human rights, most with a gender component.[1] However, as is detailed below, implementation and enforcement often fails to meet the letter and spirit of these laws, conventions, and programs.

2.3 Gender-related demographic and social trends

Major demographic changes since 1990 influence the changing gender relations, roles, and opportunities of Mongolian men and women. Mongolia's rapid transition brought profound shifts in the distribution of the population across the country, including: (1) a large out-migration in the early and mid-1990s of people from urban to rural areas as large numbers of displaced workers took up herding; (2) continuing and increasing in-migration to Ulaanbaatar and other large urban centers, particularly to the peri-urban areas of these centers; and (3) stable or declining populations in more remote towns and villages (*aimag* and *soum* centers).

Together, these movements have resulted in a population concentrated in two very different living environments – rural herding communities and large urban centers. Roughly a third of Mongolians live in rural herding areas, which absorbed a more than a doubling of population since 1990. A further 40% live in Mongolia's three largest urban centers of Ulaanbaatar, Darhan, and Erdenet (and quite likely more given that many migrants are not officially registered).[2] The dual concentration of Mongolia's population in rural areas as herders, on the one hand, and in large urban centers, especially Ulaanbaatar, on the other, and the continuing flow of migrants into urban areas, has important implications for women as well as men.

Demographically, transition has also been accompanied by a significant increase in the number of women-headed households, a steep decline in the population growth rate,[3] a strong desire among most mothers to limit the number of future children,[4] an increase in the number of teenage mothers, an increase in the number of abortions,[5] a decrease in the number of marriages, and a relatively stable number of divorces.[6] The annual population growth rate has fallen from 2.5% from 1979-1989 to 1.4% from 1990-2000.[7] The number of women-headed households increased by 44% from 1993 to 1998, and today more than 10% of households are headed by women, although this number does not reflect households in which the husband is incapacitated or unemployed and the woman

is the primary income-earner. As noted below, female-headed households have higher incidence of poverty. Though the number of female-headed households has grown, the number of women receiving alimony fell precipitously from 1994 to 1998.[8]

Many health indicators declined sharply after 1990, and then have gradually stabilized and/or improved in the ensuing years. Although women's life expectancy is significantly greater than men's (69 for women vs. 65 for men as of 2000), increasing costs and reduced access to quality health care are a major source of hardship and vulnerability to women and men. Though there has been some improvement since the mid-1990s, maternal mortality rates are high,[9] as are rates of sexually transmitted diseases.[10]

2.4 Gender-related issues toward women's participation in Mongolia's market economy and private sector.

Economic transition brought greater financial freedoms and opportunities along with the strains of reduced per capita income, increased cost of living, and reduced social services. Though the introduction of the market economy has deeply affected both men and women, women have been affected differently and in more ways than men. On one hand, women have responded rapidly to new economic opportunities, especially in the urban informal sector, and are very active in economic life. Women have a higher share of jobs in professional and "white collar" occupations and sectors than men, and they play a major role in the economic life of both rural and urban families, both in terms of income-generating labor and, often, in managing family finances. Women form the majority of employees in professional, technician, clerk and service worker occupations.

Overall, however, women have less access to the most desirable employment, lower levels of income, and higher levels of unemployment and poverty than men. Women have lower employment rates, and higher real unemployment rates, than men, in part due to the predominance of women in many of the sectors that were privatized, closed down, or downsized, and to the fact that more women (63%) than men (37%) lost their jobs in the economic restructuring that took place from 1992 and 1995.[11] Though women have a higher share of jobs in professional and "white collar" occupations and industrial sectors than men, they are "concentrated in middle and lower levels while men are in senior management and decision-making positions."[12]

In both rural and urban areas, transition has been accompanied by a large shift in women's labor from formal employment into a combination of unpaid domestic labor and self-employment as members of herder households in rural areas and as entrepreneurs in the informal sector in large urban areas.

In rural areas, the increased number of herding households means a greater number of women who follow the traditional strict division of labor and long hours of women's household and productive work. Women herders are typically responsible for cooking, cleaning, gathering water and fuel, and raising children. They also face long hours of work as the family member primarily responsible for gathering and processing livestock products for sale or barter and for family consumption. Women are generally not directly

compensated for this work. In addition, the reduction of state services for herding families means that herding women have virtually no opportunities to send children to child care or to pre-school/kindergarten.

According to the UNIFEM study, "For women, the return to the household economy has involved making more household food along with traditional crafts, such as clothes, boots and felt for tents. Productive and reproductive work have increased for herder women. Domestic and care work, invisible in official statistics, has intensified as a result of the shrinking of public expenditure in social services. The scope and volume of herder women's work has increased, lengthening the (already long) working day more than for men. The livestock sector is one in which broad dimensions of poverty and insecurity under economic reform as well as increasing inequalities among herders are most manifest."[13]

In large urban areas, women also face a "double or triple work burden," as they typically are responsible for most child-rearing, and domestic household work, in addition to income-earning business and employment. Increasingly, women in Ulaanbaatar and other large urban centers have turned to the informal sector for employment and income. According to the Informal Sector Survey commissioned by USAID in 2000, women form the majority of informal sector entrepreneurs. Women figure most prominently in informal sectors with the lowest capital entry requirements, like food processing.[14] However, women's reliance on jobs in the informal sector comes with long-term vulnerability as informal sector entrepreneurs typically are not enrolled in social and medical insurance programs. Although little research has been done, it would be useful to look at the economic and employment status of women living in the peri-urban "*ger* districts" of Ulaanbaatar and other large cities.

Despite a lack of comprehensive data, it is clear that on average, women have lower positions and incomes than men, despite typically higher education levels. "Women most often work as junior and middle auxiliary positions and are concentrated in the lower income sectors of public and private sector … Another evidence of gender discrimination is the concentration of women in the low paid jobs. Women occupy lower positions in the job hierarchy and men occupied more prestigious jobs that offer higher pay. As women occupy lower positions in the job hierarchy their salaries are correspondingly lower." "[Women] are clustered at the lower end of the occupational and decision-making hierarchy in formal employment and, despite the lack of sex-disaggregated data on income and earnings, fragmentary and survey data indicate a sharp gender disparity in earnings."[15]

Women are also more vulnerable to poverty than men. Some key indicators from the 1998 Living Standards Measurements Survey are not disaggregated by sex. However, what is apparent from the surveys is that the numbers of female-headed households has risen dramatically, and that a disproportionate percentage of these households are poor, and, if not poor, extremely vulnerable to poverty. "The poorer the household, the higher the proportion of female-headed households."[16] For example, although female headed

households make up about 10% of the total households, almost 25% of "very poor" households are female-headed.

A number of factors contribute to women's unfavorable economic status relative to men.

2.4.1 Discrimination and gender biases in the labor market, including traditional gender-based roles and divisions of labor. Although the Constitution, labor law, and other laws of Mongolia require equal treatment of women, in fact women are regularly discriminated against in the labor market. In the formal sector, employers are more reluctant to hire women because of their child-bearing and child-care obligations: "women who want employment are often obliged to sign away rights such as maternity benefit or family leave in order to secure a job in the private sector."[17] Job advertisements in the newspapers openly specify requirements as to applicants' sex, age and appearance. Senior management positions are routinely given to men, despite women with commensurate education and experience, and women have tended to be the first laid off upon closure or restructuring of industries in which they traditionally predominated.

2.4.2 Women's poorer access to assets and credit. Legal ownership of assets is registered in the name of the head of household, who may conduct business with those assets without the consent of his or her spouse. Therefore privatized assets, including apartments and livestock, most often ended up in the hands of men rather than women. This further limits women's ability to start businesses or to use assets as collateral for loans.[18] Continuing, though improving, problems in the financial sector, lack of familiarity with business models, and other factors further limit access to credit for women as well as men.

2.4.3 Inadequacy of legal mechanisms and institutions to enforce constitutional and legal provisions requiring gender equity. In terms of access to employment, income, decisions on family assets, entitlements to property and alimony in divorce cases, the Constitution and legal framework guarantee women equal rights. In practice though, there are many circumstances in which women whose rights are violated have little recourse in the legal system. For example, although the Labor Law (1999) prohibits gender discrimination in recruitment or in setting wages, these sorts of problems occur regularly in practice. In property cases, for example, although legally both spouses have equal rights to decisions on property and assets, the "realization is not guaranteed at court and administrative levels, and there are many complaints on the part of women. Loss of housing happens often, and it makes it more difficult for women to access credit without collateral guarantees."[19] The inability of legal institutions to address gender problems stems from a wide variety of factors, including the lack of familiarity and experience of legal professionals themselves with gender related issues, hesitation of claimants to bring gender-related problems (such as domestic violence) to police, judicial or public scrutiny, and lack of the public's own legal education.

2.4.4 The decline in social services and state policies that enabled and encouraged women to work as wage-earners. As noted above, socialist Mongolia guaranteed virtually universal employment and actively promoted the establishment of child care, pre-school, and kindergarten facilities that enabled and encouraged women to work. Since 1990, state expenditure for education fell sharply, as did the number of nurseries and kindergartens, and children's enrollment in these institutions. Although expenditures as a percent of GDP have recovered in the late 1990s, the percentage of children enrolled in child care and kindergartens is still below pre-1990 levels. For example, where there were 441 nurseries in 1990, by 1999 there were only 21.

2.4.5 Traditional gender-based division of labor, and high domestic labor burden of women in both rural and urban Mongolia. In both rural and urban areas, the demands of the market economy and large reductions in numbers of child care facilities[20] and pre-school/kindergartens have increased women's domestic child-rearing and household duties at the same time that economic circumstances necessitate women's active participation in the labor force. Nearly half of the labor force is made up of women, who are expected to carry out the majority of domestic household work even when both the husband and wife earn income outside the home. Many women carry out income-generating productive work at the same time that they take primary responsibility for traditional duties of bearing and raising children and domestic household work. Especially within the greatly increased number of rural herding families, women face "entrenched norms about women's domestic and care work and men's status as heads of households and breadwinners."

2.5 Limitations on women's participation in Mongolia's democracy and civil society.

There are also significant differences in terms of men and women's participation in Mongolia's democracy. Although men and women exercise their right to vote in roughly equal percentages, and women have a relatively strong voice in public debate, few women reach the high and mid-level decision making positions in government and in the private sector. Women occupy only 9 of the 76 seats in Parliament, no ministerial or cabinet posts, and only a single deputy ministerial seat. Only two women sit on the Supreme and Constitutional Courts, although around 60% of judges are women. No women serve as as *aimag* (provincial) governors or city mayors, and women make up only 13% of *aimag* and capital city *hurals* (elected local government representatives), 17% of ministerial department directors, and 4.5% of aimag and capital city governors.[21] In addition, women are severely under-represented within the governing councils of the main political parties: generally around 10% of the members of party councils and conferences are women.[22]

On the other hand, women dominate Mongolia's fledgling NGO community, and NGOs advocating for women's rights, political and social empowerment are among the most active and strong local NGOs. However, there is limited understanding of the role of citizens in democracy and civil society, and few spontaneous grassroots movements

advocating for specific legal or policy reforms: "At present the education and level of understanding of politics at the level of 'grassroots' women is very low in Mongolia. There are also strong weaknesses in public perceptions of women's leadership capacities as well. Women citizens don't have their own beliefs and opinions on politics and are not aware of ways of participating in politics, and what benefits can be achieved from political participation."[23]

As noted above in the section on women's participation in the market economy, inadequacies in legal institutions and enforcement of laws and policies also restrict women's participation in political life as well as overall access to justice and the rule of law, access that is central to women's equal participation in political life and civil society. For example, although the Constitution and legal framework acknowledge and defend women's equal rights, in practice women are disadvantaged by lack of enforcement of laws designed to protect their equal rights.

2.6 Gender gap in education: increasing gap between male and female school enrollment rates, a gap that increases at higher levels of the education system.

In some areas, pre-conceived notions about gender are turned upside down in Mongolia. This is especially the case in education. Though literacy rates are high for both women and men in Mongolia (officially reported at around 97%), women have higher rates of educational enrollment and attainment, and this so-called "reverse gender gap" increases at higher levels of the educational system. Enrollment rates of both boys and girls in primary and secondary schools declined steeply after transition. However, it is important to note that overall enrollment rates for both boys and girls remain below pre-transition levels, and improvements are needed for both. Male enrollment was more than 11% below female enrollment in lower secondary school (grades 5-8), and 13% below female enrollment in upper secondary school during the 1999-2000 school year. The gender disparity increases at higher levels of the education system. By grade 8 (age 15), nearly 40% of boys, and over 20% of girls, were not attending school. For grades 9 and 10, whereas 70% of boys and girls were enrolled in 1989-1990, in 1999-2000, only 34% of boys and girls were enrolled in upper secondary school. At the tertiary level, 70% of students are women. Most children not attending school are from rural areas (96%).

Reasons for reduced enrollment rates cited in the Participatory Living Standards Assessment include: families' poor economic condition and inability to pay fees and costs for dormitories, clothes, and educational materials, closure and poor conditions of schools and dormitories, the need for children's labor at home, poor quality and attitudes of teachers, lack of relevance of the educational system to contemporary needs, and little hope of school providing students with education that they will be able to use later because of a lack of jobs and/or lack of relevance of the curriculum to available jobs.

Reasons cited for the gender gap in education include families needing boys to help tend livestock herds (although there is also a strong demand for girls domestic work among herding households) and a perception among parents that "education is necessary for women to obtain employment, but is not quite so important for men": "The preference for

girl's schooling is generally also more linked to perceptions of gender difference. Parents tend to assume that boys can do any type of job and sustain their lives as compared to girls. But an emerging factor of differentiation may be that education is seen as the only avenue for girls' economic security and opportunity, whereas for boys, the livestock sector and the business opportunities it gives rise to, has expanded."[24] Other factors include families' increased need for children to help out with domestic and productive work at home, lack of adequate school facilities, lack of relevance of the school curriculum, textbooks, teachers, and boy's own lack of interest in school.[25]

Although women's education levels are higher than men's (a problem that requires further effort to improve male educational enrollment and attainment), this does not translate into better opportunities for employment, higher salaries, or for assuming decision-making positions.[26]

2.7 Domestic violence

Domestic violence is a serious problem in Mongolia. A series of studies conducted over the past decade indicate that one-third of women have experienced some form of domestic violence and more than one tenth had been beaten by their partner.[27] It is likely that the extent of domestic violence is greater than what is officially reported. Police, courts, and hospitals lack standardized systems for recording and reporting domestic violence cases. Furthermore, they do not generally allow public access to records that do exist. Victims are often reluctant to report domestic violence cases, and this is exacerbated by the lack of state policy and institutions to provide shelter for domestic violence victims, the long time required to process domestic violence cases (during which time the victim often must remain living with the perpetrator), relatively small sentences meted out to offenders, and tendency for the victims to withdraw domestic violence claims.[28] The studies indicate a high correlation between unemployment and domestic violence, and a correlation between low levels of education and domestic violence. The lack of a strong legal framework further hinders effective prosecution of domestic violence cases.

3 ASSESSMENT OF HOW GENDER RELATIONS AFFECT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE RESULTS AND HOW PROPOSED RESULTS AFFECT THE RELATIVE STATUS OF MEN AND WOMEN.

USAID's 1999-2003 strategy outlines two major strategic objectives: (1) the consolidation of Mongolia's democratic transition; and (2) accelerated and broadened, environmentally sound, private sector growth. These same objectives are expected to be at the core of the follow-on strategy covering the period 2004 through 2008. The gender related issues discussed above provide both some potential constraints to the realization of planned program results, and opportunities to improve results if gender concerns are better integrated into current and future programming. As noted above, in almost all cases, USAID programs directly or indirectly stand to have positive effects on gender equity and balance in the social, economic, and political life of Mongolia. Understanding

gender problems, most of which disadvantage Mongolia's women, and factoring such information into USAID's programs and operations, provides an opportunity to better capitalize on the talents of Mongolia's women in achieving overall strategic objectives.

Strategic Objective 1: consolidation of Mongolia's democratic transition
Strategic Objective 2: accelerate and broaden environmentally sound private sector growth.

NCSC's Judicial Reform Program is related indirectly and directly to gender issues. Almost all of the proposed results in the JRP would have a beneficial effect on gender relations if realized. As noted above, weaknesses in the legal system and in the judiciary in particular reduce the enforcement of gender-related laws and policies. The new civil code, drafted with input in some cases from the JRP, and a major subject for JRP-supported legal training, also addresses gender discrimination. In addition, the work of the JRP to provide training to judges and prosecutors on domestic violence cases – including ways of obtaining testimony and preserving evidence – should lay the framework for effective prosecution of domestic violence while also shaping a more appropriate legal response to other gender-based cases.

Although achievement of proposed results is unlikely to be affected in a major way, it is noteworthy that the higher percentage of women judges as opposed to prosecutors is said to reflect the lower status of judges. A reformed and more professional judiciary is likely to increase the role of judges and with it, the culture of women playing important roles in society. It remains to be seen to what extent high level judges and Ministry officials, almost all of whom are male, will actively promote proposed reforms that increase women's equity or improve court administration an area where women typically dominate as clerks.

In addition to promoting private sector growth, Mercy Corp's Gobi Initiative is working to help establish the foundation for an effective rural civil society mostly by working with the business community and business associations, herders groups, and cooperatives. In its work to build foundations for rural civil society in the business community, the Gobi Initiative actively seeks to include women in all aspects of its work. According to an evaluation of gender equity carried out as part of an overall program evaluation conducted in 2002, women are active in Gobi Initiative-sponsored training, especially in business development (men, on the other hand, dominate in agriculture development training).[29] Traditional divisions of labor that are particularly strong in rural areas may in some way constrain the achievement of results planned under the program by curtailing the involvement of women. For example, the same survey found that location of training strongly affects women participation: "If activities held in long distance, men usually dominate …. If the activity is held in nearby living places of herders where women and men have equal access, women always dominate." On the other hand, the program's active efforts to emphasize the important role of women in herder households and in rural businesses should expand economic opportunities for women during the coming years.

For IRI's democracy strengthening project, low numbers of women in decision-making roles in political parties may be a constraint to achieving goals in terms of improving their organizational structure and downward accountability. IRI in the past conducted training programs for political parties and conferences for NGOs on women in politics prior to the 2000 parliamentary elections.

On the economic side, gender biases against women in the labor market, women's lack of access to assets, restricted access to credit, high domestic workload are all potential constraints to the successful realization of SO 2 and its intermediate results. However, several USAID initiatives address these constraints. The Gobi Initiative's gender focus is described above. Under the USAID-financed management team, the Agriculture Bank has increased provision of credit to rural women and men. Women have been particularly active in taking advantage of new products that the bank is offering. Of the total loans disbursed in 2002 (up until the end of November), women have borrowed 54% (53,389 out of 98,747). Women borrowers during this period account for 58% of pensioner's loans, 56% of salary loans, and 44% of small business loans, and almost 50% of loans secured by deposit. By contrast, males have taken most of the herder loans (89%) and larger investment loans. With regard to management, most of the Agriculture Bank senior management and many of the branch managers are female.

3.1 Other gender issues related to achievement of USAID strategic objectives:

Low educational enrollment is cause for concern both in terms of Mongolia's ability to compete in the global, increasingly knowledge-based economy and to improve its geo-political position. Men's lower educational enrollment and attainment rates, and higher drop-out rates, also constitute a significant and unusual potential gender problem. Economically, the decline in both male and female enrollment is cause for concern, given the need for an educated, knowledge-based workforce and leadership to compete in the global market place and participate in the increasingly international and interconnected political arena. Men's lower education level is cited by women as a cause of family tensions, domestic violence, and difficulties in finding suitable spouses. It is also a cause for concern given that men dominate most high-level political and decision making positions. Given the relative openness of Mongolia's economy, and as globalization requires Mongolian businesses to compete in the international economy that is increasingly knowledge-based, making the most of the talents of both women and men will be critical.

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[1] Of specific relevance, the government of Mongolia has ratified the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1965), the Convention on Maternity Rights Protection (1969), the Convention on the Equal Remuneration (of men and women) (1969), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1981), and the Convention on Consent to Marriage Minimum Age and Registration of Marriages (1991). The government also adopted a National Program for the Advancement of Women in 1996, and women's issues have been reflected in numerous other national programs, including the National Poverty Alleviation Program, the National Program for the Reduction of Unemployment, the National Program on AIDS, the National Reproductive Health Program, the National Program on Health and Social Protection of the Elderly, and the National Program on Social Welfare of the Disabled.

[2] Herders make up a third of households today, and residents of large urban areas make up 40% of the population. In 1990, there were less than 75,000 herding households and a third of the population was employed in agriculture, which accounted for around 15% of GDP. Today more than 185,000 households, or a third of all households, rely on herding as their primary source of employment and income. Nearly half of the labor force is employed in agriculture, which accounts for approximately 30% of GDP (of agricultural production, livestock makes up over 83%). (NSO (2001), pp. 68, 84, 144-5.) On the other hand, at the same time that there has been a large increase in rural herding populations, the population of large urban areas, especially Ulaanbaatar, has grown steadily in absolute and relative terms over the past decade. The share of the three largest cities – Ulaanbaatar, Darhan, and Erdenet – rose from 32.7% of total population in 1990 to 40% in 2001 (and the increase may be more, as official statistics may not capture the large inflow of population to Ulaanbaatar in the past 3 years). Ulaanbaatar alone has grown from 555,200 in 1990 (26.4% of total population) to 812,500 in 2001 (33.3% of total), and unofficial estimates peg the capital city's population at 1 million.

[3] UNFPA, NSO, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor, *Population and Reproductive Health in Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar, 2001, p. 18.

[4] NSO, UNFPA (1999). See fact sheet #4.

[5] UNFPA (2001), p. 29. Officially recorded abortion rate per 1,000 live births rose from 155 in 1986 to 241 in 1989, 396 in 1990, 442 in 1992 and thereafter fluctuating between 200 and 350.

[6] UNICEF 2000, p. 25.

[7] UNFPA (2001), p. 5.

[8] UNICEF (2000), p. 25. "Divorce issues pertaining to children's custody, support payments for childcare and division of family property can be agreed between the spouses or settled by court decision in the case of disagreement. In court, the spouses are asked about the custody of their children of 7 years and older. However, not all divorces are registered even if the marriage was. While the number of single mothers with children below the age of 16 has continually increased, the number of women who receive alimony from their divorced husbands has decreased sharply. This picture gives grounds for the assumption that the number of men who do not want to take a divorce case to court and thus avoid the payment of alimony is increasing."

[9] UNICEF 2000, p. 53. "Mongolia is still included in the category of countries having a high maternal mortality rate and during the past 10 years, despite decreases in the birth rates, a high maternal mortality rate still remains. There were 161 deaths per 100,000 births from 1996-1998 according to a survey conducted on maternal mortality."

[10] UNFPA (2001), p. 31.

[11] MoHSW (2000), p. 29.

[12] NSO (2002), p. 60.

[13] UNIFEM, p. 3.

[14] USAID, p. B___

[15] UNIFEM, p. 3.

[16] UNIFEM, p. 43.

[17] UNIFEM, p. 12, p. 39..

[18] WIRC (1998), p. 12-13. "Nevertheless, form our research it was clear that men were able to gain access to loans and financial support far more easily than women. This was principally a consequence of the registration of private assets such as housing and livestock which has occurred in the transition period and it is men who have declared themselves head of household and registered all such assets in their name.

Consequently, women are unable to call on such assets to guarantee credit or loans from official sources without their partners consent."

[19] UNICEF (2000), p. 25.
[20] UNICEF (2000), p. 18.
[21] MOSWL (2001), p. 22.
[22] ADB, p. 17.
[23] ADB, p. 18.
[24] UNIFEM, p. 32.
[25] UNICEF (2000), p. 44-45; Ministry of Health, UN agencies (2000), p. 30-31.
[26] UNIFEM, p. 39.
[27] UNICEF (2000), p. 23.
[28] Soros Foundation, pp. 3-10.
[29] Gobi Initiative, gender evaluation, 2002, p. 4.